

were unanimous in urging Alexander to accede to a Egency. Macdonald especially supported that proposition with much warmth ; and among the observations he made I recollect Dessolles mentioned the following : — " I am not authorized to treat in any way for the fate reserved for the Emperor. We have full powers to treat for the Egency, the army, and France; but the Emperor has positively forbidden us to specify anything personally regarding himself."⁷ Alexander merely replied, " That does not astonish me." The Marshals then, resuming the conversation, dwelt much on the respect which was due to the military glory of France. They strongly manifested their disinclination to abandon the family of a man who had so often led them to victory; and lastly, they reminded the Emperor Alexander of his own declaration, in which he proclaimed, in his own name as well as on the part of his Allies, that it was not their intention to impose on France any government whatever.

Dessolles, who had all along declared himself in favor of the Bourbons, in his turn entered into the discussion with as much warmth as the partisans of the Regency. He represented to Alexander how many persons would be compromised for merely having acted or declared their opinions behind the shield of his promises. He repeated what Alexander had already been told, that the Egency would, in fact, be nothing but Bonaparte in disguise. However, Dessolles acknowledged that such was the effect of Marshal Macdonald's powerful and persuasive eloquence that Alexander seemed to waver; and, unwilling to give the Marshals a positive refusal, he had recourse to a subterfuge, by which he would be enabled to execute the design he had irrevocably formed without seeming to take on himself alone the responsibility of a change of government. Dessolles accordingly informed us that Alexander at last gave the following answer to the Marshals : "Gentlemen, I am not alone; in an affair of such importance I must consult the King of Prussia, for I have promised to do nothing without consulting him. In a few hours you shall know my decision." It was this

decision which the Marshals went to
wait for at JStey's,